



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0732KY-1 for Boyd County Board of Education

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has set forth an achievable reform vision of how students are educated across the Consortium through the development and implementation of STUDIO Learning. The vision is aligned with the core educational assurance areas, and will address the learning needs of 6th through 12th grade students by implementing STUDIO Learning which will equip each participating school with one technology-rich Studio Teaching classroom focused on student centered learning. Factors that make the vision is achievable is that it builds upon current data systems, has curriculum alignment with Common Core Standard, and has supports for teachers. By providing ongoing professional development and training, as well as School-based Leadership Teams and Professional Learning communities at each school site teachers are likely to be able to implement the program with fidelity.</p> <p>Utilizing the various assessments listed such as K-Prep, MAP and CITTs, should provide the applicant with information to affect student growth by providing teachers with data to driven the instructional process. It is unclear how the applicant will connect all of the assessments listed in the proposal to help guide the teaching/learning process or how students will be empowered by the information gained from the assessments.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>a. The applicant clearly presents information on the target population to help demonstrates its approach to implementing its reform proposal that will support high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation of that proposal. The applicant thoroughly describes how districts were chosen. The lead LEA sought buy in from regional school districts with similar demographics, assessment data, and gaps and was able to form a consortium of 13 school districts. Each district selected the participating schools and students based on free/reduced lunch status (40% and above), assessment data and disability and gender gaps.</p> <p>b. The applicant has provided a complete list of eligible schools. Participating schools include: Verity Middle School; Paul Blazer High School; Boyd County Middle School; Boyd County High School; East Carter Middle School; West Carter Middle School; EastCarter High School; West Carter High School; Elliott County High School; Fairview High School; McKell Middle School; Wurtland Middle School; Greenup County High School; Louisa Middle School; Lawrence County High School; Inez Middle School; Warfield Middle School; Sheldon Clark High School; Morgan County Middle School; Morgan County High School; Raceland High School; Rowan County Middle School; Rowan County High School; Russell Middle School; Russell High School.</p> <p>c. The applicant states that it will serve all students in grades 6-12 across all Consortium Member districts. A total of 46,278 students and 902 teachers will participate in the proposed program. The percentage of low-income students is at or above 40%.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant clearly demonstrates how the reform initiative will be implemented. An implementation timeline which outlines goals, related tasks, deliverables, timeframe and persons responsible are clearly specified in the program to ensure</p>		

implementation. The proposal highlights the likelihood of increasing the levels of personalization and the departure from traditional instructional practices by replacing them with mass customized instruction which is student centered. For example, the characteristics of instruction will become more flexible; redefining the teacher role from one that is teacher-focused to one that is student-driven; project-based (inquiry-oriented) activities where students 'learn by doing which should likely foster strong relationships that encourage students to be active learners thus increasing student achievement.

As a part of the implementation strategy, the applicant will document its approach in order that others may replicate the results by creating a document for dissemination which provides justification for the practice; the problems being addressed; an overview of the implementation strategy including identifying the main activities and other related information and the degree to which 'standard' interventions were adapted to meet the individual needs of each student. This document should assist in district wide change beyond the consortium.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)

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4

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

a. The applicant outlines how the applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals. The applicant outlines some ambitious goals for performance on summative assessments in the participating elementary and middle school. Most goals for growth from 2013-2017 and post-grant are appropriate and achievable. The percentage of students reaching benchmark in each content area is expected to increase 3% each year of the grant except for those areas where a 3% increase would exceed 100% and areas where more than 3% increase is called for.

However, some of the goals illustrated in the chart are achievable not ambitious. For example, the baseline data for Rowan LEA reports baseline data at 100% in 10th grade students meeting ACT plan benchmark in English, but expects to only have 73% of students to achieve its goal in the first year of implementation. The same LEA reports baseline data at 20% in 10th grade students meeting ACT plan benchmark in Mathematics, but expects to only have 17% of students to achieve its goal in the first year of implementation.

b. The applicant presents data in a confusing manner. The information provided in the charts are not uniform. It cannot be easily ascertained if each LEA is presenting annual goals that are ambitious yet attainable. For example, the Ashland LEA baseline data and annual goals decrease incrementally over the grant cycle while the remaining LEA present baseline data for the 2010-2011 school year, no data for the 2011-2012 school year and annual goals increase incrementally over the grant cycle.

c. The applicant outlines some ambitious and attainable goals for increasing graduation rates. The high school graduation rates for Ashland, Morgan, and Raceland increase incrementally over the grant cycle. Graduation rates for Carter, Menifee, and Rowan LEA are ambitious but it is unlikely to be achievable as the baseline data reports graduation rates from 78%-84% increasing to 100% post grant cycle. The applicant does not present information in a uniform manner for each LEA thus causing confusion in the interpretation.

d. The applicant outlines goals for increasing college enrollment rates. College enrollment is calculated as the ratio between college-enrolled students and their graduating cohort. It is questionable if the goals for college enrollment is attainable for each LEA. Boyd, Carter, Fairview, Lawrence, Martin, Menifee, Raceland and Rowan set goals of 21.2% or higher post grant cycle. The applicant does not present information in a uniform manner for each LEA thus causing confusion in the interpretation.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a. The applicant details information to demonstrate its efforts to advance student learning and achievement within the last four years. As a whole the consortium has stated its increased focus on providing ongoing, job-embedded professional development and training for their educators and implementing Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) for every student which likely account for the growth that is noted in some areas. Information presented depicts some regression in many of the LEAs. For example, Elliott County has not demonstrated continuous improvement for the years reported. The districts have not demonstrated the ability to show continuous growth in student achievement.

b. The applicant has provided examples of its ability to achieve ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently low-performing schools. The applicant increased district support and involvement in: individual schools, common assessments, common curriculum, instructional strategies at all levels, teacher and administrator growth, data analysis, administrative monitoring of processes and procedures. Two schools were highlighted as making improvements such as improvements in ACT percentage of students meeting benchmarks in all areas from 2011 to 2012, decreased disciplinary referrals, and a persistently low-performing school outperforming each of the other elementary schools in both reading and math for its district.

c. The applicant outlines evidence providing student performance data to key stakeholders. The consortium's student performance data are available and easily accessible to students, educators and parents various methods. Student conferences are held to inform students of their performance and goal setting. Parents may access their children's progress via Parent Portal, an online system that allows parents and students to check grades and attendance from home. In addition, parents receive progress reports twice per grading period and copies of ACT, PLAN, and EXPLORE assessment results as well as the opportunities to attend conferences to discuss scores.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)

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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly demonstrates a moderate level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments by publicly releasing school level expenditures for instruction, instructional support, and school administration. The applicant shares information through its district website and local newspaper regarding salary tables. Actual personnel salaries for all school-level instructional and support staff are reported and made available to the public in Annual Financial Reports posted on district websites. Monthly reports are presented to the Boards of Education, which available to the public. Actual salaries of personnel are available upon request. It is uncertain if the applicant makes the public aware if it is able to request this information and the processes involved in gaining the information.

Non-personnel expenditures at the school level are made available monthly to the School Based Decision Making Council (SBDM); are reported on the district report card and are reported in the annual audit.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)

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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly demonstrates evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory and regulatory requirements. For example, State law delineates the Board has general control and management of the public schools in its district. The Board may establish schools and provide for courses and other services it deems necessary for the promotion of education and the general health and welfare of pupils, consistent with the administrative regulations of the Kentucky Board of Education.

Districts of innovation are provided flexibility from selected Kentucky Administrative Regulations, Kentucky Revised Statutes, and local board of education policies for school administrators, teachers, and staff to meet the diverse needs of students, thus the Districts are positioned to expand with it as strategy of helping students become college and career ready.

Kentucky's Unbridled Learning: College- and Career-Readiness For All initiative, passed by the Kentucky General Assembly in 2009, allows the applicant to successfully implement the personalized learning environment described in this proposal.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has clearly demonstrated evidence of meaningful stakeholder support in the development of the proposal. Specific examples to engage students, families, teachers, principals and other stakeholders included:

- meetings with Parent Leadership Teams at participating schools, potential project partners (e.g., businesses, colleges, universities, etc.) and site-based Decision Making Councils at participating schools,
- meetings and presentations to all Boards of Education overseeing Consortium districts

- obtaining at least 70% buy-in from all staff attendance and participation in Superintendent Advisory Meetings and District Leadership Team meetings

Various letters of support as well as detailed Memorandum of Understanding from stakeholders demonstrate the level of meaningful stakeholder engagement.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has clearly demonstrated evidence of a high-quality plan with goals to implement personalized learning environments. The consortium describes a multitude of persistent problems that negatively impact learning. Examples listed include achievement gaps between subgroups on benchmark tests, the high percentage of high school incompleteness rates and percentage of students who are not career and college-ready.

The gaps and needs have provided the applicant with targeted goals for a personalized learning program. The STUDIO Learning plan provided details the goals, activities, deliverables, timeline and key personnel responsible which will likely yield some positive results in improving student achievement. The applicant plans to complete a needs assessment for the consortium and have the School-based Leadership Teams use data analysis and feedback gathered to develop an action-plan, specific strategies, timelines and roles to ensure implementation of personalized learning environment in months 6-12. The applicant does not address revisiting these strategies at any other time during the grant. It is uncertain if the applicant has provided adequate time to this particular for these strategies.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a. The applicant has documented a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The plan includes an approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students that enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards. The applicant is likely to improve student achievement by the implementation processes which encourage students to be individually accountable for their education with positive interdependence, "promotive" interaction, and group processing. The applicant has outlined broad strategies with resources for individual learning plans which are linked to the Kentucky college and career readiness standards which support a feasible infrastructure proposal. The Studio Teaching and project-based/inquiry-oriented teaching will likely provide support involving students in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest while providing them access and exposure to diverse contexts and perspectives.

b. The individual learning plans which are collaboratively developed with input from students, parents, teachers and counselors, will provide educators the opportunity to customize instructional practice and learning activities, real-time data utilization, and targeted interventions to meet the unique needs of individual students. Consortium districts will measure student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements using multiple tools including (all measures are aligned to the Kentucky Core Academic Standards and the Common Core State Standards) approximately every six weeks which should provide students with the timely feedback necessary for improvement. Teachers will be provided with accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students by having access to the Kentucky System of Intervention (KSI), which is a statewide framework for providing systematic, comprehensive services to address academic and behavioral needs for all students, preschool through grade 12.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)

20

17

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant outlines a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The applicant has built a strategy for professional development and support by utilizing pre-existing structures to support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies in their classrooms and schools. A foundation has been established regarding the key elements which will be discussed during professional development. The applicant plans to "retool" the Professional Learning Communities which currently exist in order to meet the participating teachers' needs. Although PLCs

can be effective in professional development, the applicant does not fully explain how the PLCs will be retooled or how frequently it will occur. More details are needed to ascertain how effective the PLCs may be.

It appears teachers will use tools, data, and resources currently in place to implement a personalized learning system within STUDIO Learning. Examples of tools that will provide actionable information that will enable teachers to respond to individual student academic needs include: MAP data; ACT, PLAN and EXPLORE data; and data used for CSIP/CDIP (Comprehensive School and District Planning). It appears that assessments occur frequently enough to measure student progress toward meeting those college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements.

Evaluation of teachers and principals within the Consortium is guided by the Kentucky Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES). The system includes of multiple measures of student growth and achievement as well as components to measure leadership, professionalism, instruction, learning climate and assessment practices. The process is likely to provide thorough and effective evaluations which will yield feedback can be utilized to collaboratively develop plans and strategies to address any identified deficiencies or weaknesses.

The consortium plans to have all STUDIO Learning teachers participate in ongoing, job-embedded professional development and training. The applicant has not fully developed a professional development plan available at this time, but has an outline of basic recommendations.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes appropriate practices and rules to help demonstrate it has a plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student the support and resources needed. The overall project management structure is provided. For example, the Project Director will provide administrative oversight, delegate responsibility for implementation of day-to-day tasks and ensure compliance with all terms and conditions of the grant as well as any applicable federal regulations. In addition, an Advisory Council, comprised of representatives from each partner district will assist project leadership in ensuring effective management of all project activities associated with the planning, development, implementation and sustainment of the initiative. The roles and responsibilities of lead and partner districts are clearly outlined and should allow for successful implementation of the proposed program.</p> <p>According to the applicant, the leadership teams within each Consortium member district should have sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as schools schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators, and school level budgets, but does not expound on its rationale .</p> <p>The applicant provides students with the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery and provides students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways. Consortium member districts offer students opportunities to participate in dual -credit and vocational and careerclasses. For example, the Boyd County Career and Technical Education Center has a dual credit agreement with Ashland Community and Technical College (transferable to any KCTCS school) and Articulation agreements with Universal Technical Institute, Lincoln College of Technology, and The University of Northwestern Ohio. Through STUDIO Learning, students should be given multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery multiple times with labs, problem solving, or activities.</p> <p>The applicant briefly addresses how it will make accommodations for students with disabilities and Limited English Proficiency. Documents will be translated and translators will be used. The applicant does not fully address how it will meet the need of students with disabilities.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes Local Education Agency and school infrastructure that are feasible to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure and provide every student the support and resources needed. Resources and instructional practices in the districts are cited to be adaptable and fully accessible to all stakeholders. Students will have access (during and after school) to electronic resources, content, and e-portfolios. Parents will be provided with an overview of the many resources available to them such as: their children's e-portfolios; secure online access to their child's academic performance and other classroom-based data; online learning resources; parental involvement activities (e.g., Leadership Team); and other resources. In addition, teachers will have access to various resources such as PLCs and on-going</p>		

professional development. On-site technical support will be available to students, educators and parents during regular school hours and the STUDIO Learning website will contain training information, user manuals and links to technical support at any time. The resources listed should provide stakeholders with adequate support.

All Consortium member districts utilize the Student Data Review and Reporting (SDDR) Application, which is designed to assist district personnel in reviewing the accuracy of the assessment results. Students and their parents have on-line access to their data files via a secure website. All Consortium member districts have an interoperable data system that meets the requirements outlined by the Race to the Top District program.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	8
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant outlines a broad plan for a continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements. The applicant plans to provide informal feedback, monthly progress reports and formal quarterly reports will be reviewed during regularly scheduled meetings for the purpose of using the information to improve the project approach as appropriate. The applicant does not provide any information about how it will address monthly reports which exceed expectations or do not meet the minimum goals set thus reducing the likelihood of continuous improvement.</p> <p>It is unclear how the evaluation will address each LEA's program implementation, details of the extent to which the project is progressing toward meeting annual goals, the extent to which the project is being implemented with fidelity, and feedback from stakeholders. The applicant has planned various informal ways to provide information to stakeholders. For example, stakeholders will be informed through regular meetings as well as email, phone conversations, fax alert regularly-scheduled phone conferences, and at a minimum, Advisory Council members will receive, weekly updates via email.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes a basic system of communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. Stakeholders will inform and be informed through regular meetings as well as email, phone conversations, fax alerts and regularly scheduled phone conferences. At a minimum, Advisory Council members will receive weekly updates via email. Monthly monitoring of project milestones will occur through the submission of standardized reporting templates, which will be distributed among all partners each quarter. Parents and the community will be informed about the project monthly through participation in the school-based Leadership Teams and through monthly updates provide on each school's and each district's websites. The applicant does not provide any strategies which will encourage active engagement of any external stakeholders, especially parents.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided required performance measures for all required groups as well as self-proposed performance measures. The performance measures included in the charts for E3 is not presented in a uniform manner for each school. The performance measures are inconsistent for each district, therefore it cannot be ascertained if the performance measures for the consortium are ambitious. Performance measures include the rationale and how the measure informs the plan and theory of action. For example, the applicant will use the PLAN assessment to as an indicator of how students will perform on ACT thus giving educators a better idea of students' strengths and weaknesses. Based on formative and summative evaluation results, the Project Advisory Council will review the measures annually to ensure that they are effectively measuring implementation progress. In the event that any measure is shown insufficient to gauge implementation progress the Advisory Council will coordinate changes with the State of Kentucky Department of Education</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a feasible approach to continuously improve its plan and evaluate its effectiveness of Rtt-D funded</p>		

activities. The STUDIO Learning Project Advisory Council Evaluation Sub-Committee will work with the U.S. Department of Education Evaluator in evaluating the effectiveness of our project. The Evaluation Sub-Committee will prepare quarterly programmatic and financial progress, which will be reviewed by the Project Advisory Council. Information and performance feedback from these reports should provide multiple feedback loops and can serve as a basis for strengthening and improving the project approach as needed to ensure an ongoing process of continuous improvement. Each school-based Leadership Team will appoint an individual to oversee and manage data collection at each school site, who will be responsible for sharing the data in a timely manner with the Evaluation Sub-Committee and others as necessary. The applicant does not have a solid plan outlined for gathering information and evaluating the effectiveness of the proposal. The applicant's plans to assign a person the task of managing data collection. It cannot be ascertained if the applicant will be collecting the same information from each participating school on a regular basis to ensure the fidelity of the evaluation.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant is requesting a grant award in the total amount of \$29,991,040 over the four year grant period. Consortium member districts will contribute \$1,115,806 per year (\$4,463,222 over four years) to support the STUDIO Learning initiative. These funds will come from each member district's General Operating budget Costs are presented for all major line items. The applicant clearly provides a justification for investments and priorities. The applicant demonstrates that funds will be budgeted to provide the required services to eligible schools. Overall costs appear reasonable to support services; however, the costs associated with principals seem excessive. Each principal will earn \$18,720 per year to oversee the project which equates to \$2, 620,800.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant has provided an initial plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The Consortium commits to the sustainability by having each Consortium member district will continue to contribute resources (e.g., maintaining technologies, space, supplies, etc.) beyond the grant-funded project period and preparing a sustainability plan within six months of the start of the project period. This plan will include identification of potential local, state and federal funding sources, as well as possible local sources of community support (e.g., in-kind donations, funds, supplies and materials, volunteers, etc.).		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: The applicant did not address this criteria.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: STUDIO Learning meets Absolute Priority 1 in that the initiative coherently and comprehensively addresses how the Consortium will build on core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are		

aligned with college and career readiness standards. The vision is aligned with the core educational assurance areas, and will address the learning needs of 6th through students by implementing STUDIO Learning which will equip each participating school with one technology-rich Studio Teaching classroom focused on student centered learning.

Total	210	156
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0732KY-2 for Boyd County Board of Education

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presented a comprehensive plan evidenced by a thorough consideration of all factors of learning. One example of this was in a description of how college and career-ready standards will be addressed. The applicant explained that the requirements vary depending on what the student is going to do after high school. STUDIO Learning included an Individual Learning Plan for each student, which will help differentiate the "readiness" depending on the student's future plans and current ability levels. Another piece of evidence supporting the comprehensiveness of the plan was that there are cited strategies for reaching each goal; one example of this was the list of strategies for "recruiting, rewarding and retaining highly effective teachers and principals." Instead of merely stating that the consortium will do this, the consortium included the strategies they will use to succeed at this goal.

The vision was coherent because each component works toward improving student learning. The applicant provided several high-quality plans for each goal or strategy which proved that the applicant thought through the steps and resources required to fully implement the plan.

The vision was clear and credible because it illustrated how the reform vision was a shift from current thinking and teaching to an environment where students are engaged in collaboration and cooperative learning that is of interest for them and moves them toward their goals. The applicant provided a strong rationale for a need for this program in their area, which is primarily rural and poor. The applicant showed that a restructuring is possible, necessary and beneficial for teachers.

The reform vision showed potential for accelerating student achievement and deepening student learning by providing personalized student support. In the reform vision, teachers are supposed to lecture less than 25% of the time; students are engaged and responsible for their own learning and teachers guide and support them. It was demonstrated that through this process, students would be better able to reach their own goals for learning.

A1 received a high score of 10 because the applicant articulated a comprehensive and coherent reform vision. The applicant demonstrated a need for the reform and created a credible way to address the need.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant included a high-quality plan for implementation that included activities, deliverables, timeframe and parties responsible. The implementation was rolled out in a reasonable fashion in order to ensure success. For example, after 3 STUDIO Learning classrooms are installed in each of the 13 districts, educator orientation sessions are held to ensure effective use of these classrooms and that the students are engaged in the learning. The applicant provided evidence to illustrate the that implementation phases were intentionally created to ensure success of the project.

The applicant demonstrated that schools were purposefully selected: based on 40%, or more, free and reduced lunch and a 31.8% rate of college and career readiness.

The applicant provided a list of participating schools that included information regarding number of high-need students and students from low-income families.

A2 received a score of 10 because the applicant thoroughly illustrated a need within the schools selected to participate in the reform. The applicant also illustrated a high-quality plan for implementation that would ensure success of the plan.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposed a plan that will radically change the teachers' and students' roles. The plan included professional development to ensure that teachers understand their new role and resources available to them as they personalize learning for students. The applicant argued that this new approach to learning would spread throughout the district. However, the applicant's plan was focused on students in grades 6-12, and the plan does not specifically specify how STUDIO Learning can/will be brought to the lower elementary grades.

The applicant included a plan of how to reflect, write and publish to share the reform proposal with other districts. The plan included activities, rationales for the activities, and deliverables. There were not specific timelines or responsible parties.

A3 received a high-range score 8. While the applicant did not specifically describe how STUDIO Learning would be spread through the lower elementary grades, the applicant demonstrated that the qualities of STUDIO Learning would benefit students of any age. The applicant also included a plan to share their work and vision with other schools; the process described for recording and sharing the STUDIO Learning plan with others exhibited a strength in the applicant's approach to continuous improvement and scaling for district-wide change. The applicant stated that they would present at conferences, trainings, and workshops "lessons learned" from their implementation and work with STUDIO. These presentations would be useful to other schools in the consortium, as well as those outside of the consortium.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	9
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrated achievable goals relative to subgroups' current performance on summative assessments. Overall, the goal for students reaching benchmarks increased by 3% each year of the grant. Some of the targets did not seem ambitious, and this was not explained. For example, math (grade 10, Carter), the current percent meeting ACT PLAN benchmark is 12.07%. After four years of the plan, the goal is 13.99%. Another example was math (grade 10, Greenup) which is currently at 14.61% and will go to 16.94% after four years.

The applicant set ambitious yet achievable goals in the area of narrowing achievement gaps. The applicant set a goal to have achievement gaps narrow for all groups, yet still have growth in all groups. The applicant set a goal for 100% of all students to reach proficiency level at the end of four years. The applicant set goals relative to the starting point for narrowing the achievement gap of student making benchmarks. The fact that the applicant addressed these areas with different goals illustrated that thought went into creating ambitious yet achievable goals relative to the starting point.

The applicant set ambitious yet achievable goals in the area of graduation rates. All graduation rates were moving toward 100%; however, for some participating schools or students, it was lower based on the starting point. For example, Morgan County High School, started at 68.8 and went to 81.8 over four years.

College enrollment goals overall are ambitious yet achievable. There were a few outliers: Martin County student with disabilities went from 15.79% to 90% and Raceland went from 64% to 69.86%. The outliers were not explained.

A4 received a high-range score of 9. Overall, the goals presented are ambitious yet achievable. A few, as mentioned above, seem out of reach, and some seem low. Overall, the goal at the end of four years was typically realistic with where the school is currently.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrated a clear track record of success. The applicant showed that all schools in the consortium have been implementing change to improve student learning. The applicant provided evidence to show that most schools have seen increases in student performance due to the changes; those who have not had increases in student performance have remained stable.

The applicant proved that an emphasis on personalized learning has already been occurring throughout the consortium. One example of this was in Boyd County Schools who have a program for 25 struggling students to receive an additional 80 hours of one-on-one instruction throughout the year. All consortium members have implemented Individualized Learning Plans.

The applicant demonstrated successes at persistently low achieving schools, including East Carter High School where performance measures improved as well as attendance and decreased discipline problems.

The consortium demonstrated a variety of ways that data is available and that teachers, parents and students are trained to use the data. The applicant demonstrated that data was used to inform instruction (Individualized Learning Plans are one example).

B1 received a high mid-range score of 11. The applicant demonstrated a track record of success by illustrating the reforms that have already been implemented and their effects, mostly on student achievement. However, the data provided only covered a three year span, so it does not provide the entire picture. The discussion of closing achievement gaps and raising high school graduation rates in the past four years was minimal. The applicant showed that ambitious and significant reforms have been achieved in at least two persistently lowest-achieving schools, and data is available in a meaningful way.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)

5

3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proved that they reach out to gather input and communicate with stakeholders in a variety of ways: website, newsletters, meetings, etc.

B2 received a 3 because the district stated that all of the listed information is available; however, the applicant does not explain the overall transparency in processes, practices, and investments. The applicant responded with simple statements addressing criteria a-d. The applicant did not explain how the consortium, a new entity, would go about establishing transparency.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant explained well how successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under the State exist.

The applicant explained that the state provides "districts of innovation" waivers that exempt districts from certain administrative regulations and statutory provisions. This would give the members of the consortium the ability to implement their plan through waivers to educational policies.

The applicant also proved that STUDIO Learning fits into the state's initiatives (Unbridled Learning) through: individual learning plans, College-Career Coach, Academic Advisor, technologies, and ongoing professional development.

B3 received a 10 because the applicant fully explained successful conditions and sufficient autonomy within the state. The applicant described conditions within the state (Unbridled Learning) that would support and work with STUDIO Learning.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

10

10

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium included 13 schools, yet the applicant showed how the schools and their communities worked together to develop and support the plan.

For each of the 13 schools, the applicant included proof of staff support and community support. The staff support was evidenced by signatures, and in one school's case a survey with 98% of certified staff responding positively. The community support was evidenced by letters of support from mayors, judges, parents, businesses, and community groups. A few of the letters were form letters of support, but more than half were original letters of support.

B4 received a 10 because the applicant showed meaningful stakeholder engagement and support in a high-quality way.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provided a high-quality plan of analysis that included activities, rationale for activities (in the way of data illustrating the needs of the participating students--both academically and socially), deliverables, timeline and responsible parties. The high-quality plan aligned with goals such as "gather feedback regarding status of personalized learning environment" that will move the applicant toward a viable plan that addresses the needs and gaps.</p> <p>Based on the information provided regarding poverty rate, unemployment, children in poverty, high school graduation rate, and county rank, the applicant's plan adequately identified needs and gaps the plan will address.</p> <p>B5 received a score of 5 because the applicant provided a high-quality plan that was laid out in table format and is realistic and will be easy to follow.</p>		

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	20
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant proved that STUDIO Learning addressed all points under subpoint a. STUDIO Learning is collaborative and cooperative. Students all have an individual learning plan that has a college and career readiness component. The applicant provided a list of resources that it will access to provide a curriculum rich in college and career-ready standards. The applicant proved the inquiry-based nature of the learning will address the exposure to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives and will address developing skills, such as goal-setting.</p> <p>The applicant proved that STUDIO Learning addressed all points under subpoint b. The individual learning plans were part of meeting these standards. Teachers also work with student individually, or in groups, according to their individual goals. The applicant listed high-quality resources that the students would be using, including ipads and digital content. The applicant also discussed the training that teachers would undergo to ensure that the resources are provided to students in a manner that improves student learning. The applicant included partnerships with community businesses and institutes of higher education as part of the plan.</p> <p>The applicant provided training to ensure that parents, students and teachers are able to transition from the typical manner of thinking about school into the STUDIO Learning environment.</p> <p>C1 received a 20. The applicant provided a high-quality plan that included activities, rationales for activities, deliverables, timelines, parties responsible for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment. The applicant was thorough in addressing all sub-points.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's plan, STUDIO Learning, personalizes and changes education. The applicant proved that resources currently in place in the district would be expanded or changed to meet the needs of the plan.</p> <p>The applicant described professional learning communities that educators will take part in to support implementation of the plan. The applicant addressed the need for change by describing that schools already have PLCs, but the applicant stated that they will be "retooled" to support the new mode of teaching and learning.</p> <p>The applicant explained the tools, data and resources that will be available to teachers. One of those tools is Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System which helps teachers create lessons based on the standards and create formative assessments.</p> <p>The applicant described how the teacher evaluation system would be used for improvement. The applicant described several trainings and resources for teachers. The applicant did not provide much explanation about how administrators will be trained or what resources they will access to support teachers in the new STUDIO Learning format.</p> <p>The applicant presented a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and</p>		

highly effective teachers and principals. The plan included provided ongoing support for teachers in the implementation of the plan. The plan does not explain how evaluation can lead to better teaching.

C2 received a low high-range score of 15. While the applicant thoroughly addressed how educators will be re-trained and provided with resources, the applicant only minimally described how it will prepare school leaders for this dramatic change. Teacher evaluation was addressed, but there was not a clear link for how the evaluation would improve student learning.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant clearly defined the consortium governance structure to provide support and services to all participating schools. A flow chart was provided. There was a lead applicant who manages the finances; there was also a Project Advisory Council and Project Director. Each participating school's role was clearly defined. Effective communication between the participating schools in the consortium was evidenced by the materials gathered in support of this grant. It was evident that each participating school (or district) provided an equal share of the materials for compiling the grant request.</p> <p>The applicant delineated specific people/positions, specific responsibilities and even a specific designation of time required to fulfill the tasks of the grant proposal.</p> <p>In listing the responsibilities of each participating school/district, the applicant proved the school leadership teams have sufficient flexibility and autonomy.</p> <p>STUDIO Learning was based on mastery-based learning and performance measures. It included individual conferences and small-group discussions with the teacher. Learning resources and instructional practices were described as adaptable because everyone in the room can be working on a different task, at their own level, at the same time.</p> <p>D1 received a high-range score of 15 because the applicant presented a high-quality plan to support project implementation. The applicant demonstrated a balance between support and autonomy for the participating schools.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant demonstrated the plan has sufficient infrastructure supports. Each student, parent and teacher will be provided access, regardless of income.</p> <p>The plan included parent orientation sessions, which also included technical support. All stakeholders will have access to technical support within the school building, during school hours. Online technical support will also be available through the vendors in the plan.</p> <p>The applicant has interoperable data systems with the ability to export information.</p> <p>D2 received a 10. The applicant provided a high-quality plan with a table outlining the activities, deliverables, timeline, and person responsible. The plan illustrated analysis and revision in regard to providing access and data to students, parents and educators.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provided a strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that included: informal feedback, monthly progress reports and formal quarterly reports.</p> <p>The applicant provided a hierarchy of oversight for the plan, which included a lead applicant and a Project Advisory Council. The applicant also provided copies of the MOU, which specifically addressed each member's responsibilities. The applicant</p>		

stated that "informal feedback, monthly progress reports and formal quarterly reports" will be reviewed by the Advisory Council to monitor progress toward the goals of STUDIO Learning. The applicant also provided a communication plan to publicly share information which included monthly school-based Leadership Teams comprised of stakeholders.

E1 received a low high-range score of 12 because the applicant's infrastructure supports and lends itself to continuous improvement through frequent monitoring, measuring, and publicly sharing of information. The applicant provided copies of the MOUs that specifically spell out responsibilities of each LEA, but aspects of continuous improvement were only somewhat evident in the MOUs.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

E2 received a 5 because the applicant cited multiple means of communicating and engaging internal and external stakeholders. One example of strong internal communication was that Advisory Council members will receive weekly updates via email. The monthly school-based Leadership Teams were an example of strong internal/external communication as parents and school members participate. Stakeholders not on the school-based Leadership Teams will receive newsletters and information via the website.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided a rationale for all measures. The applicant addressed each of the required performance measures, for a total of 12 performance measures.

Throughout the plan, the applicant made a strong case for using the ACT sequence to assess students' progress toward college and career-readiness standards. The other performance measures were tied into other needs and gaps that the applicant mentioned. The ACT was appropriate because the applicant was using the college and career-readiness indicators to measure if students are making progress toward their individual learning plans.

The applicant stated that the Advisory Council will review the measure annually.

E3 received a 4 because the performance measures were selected as a best fit for the goals of the plan. Most of the performance measures were ambitious yet achievable; however, outside of Developmental Assets Framework and perception surveys, the performance measures largely do not address health or social-emotional indicators.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

E4 received a mid-range score of 3. There were people designated in the plan to support evaluation efforts. There were regularly scheduled meetings to complete the evaluation. The applicant did not specifically address how to evaluate such activities as professional development or technology usage (ipads are a component of the plan). The applicant demonstrated that evaluation will occur, but targets, such as those listed above, were not specifically addressed.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium identified funds from all participating schools'/districts' general operating budgets that will be contributed to the plan. While the applicant stated that community members would want to contribute when they see the effectiveness of the plan, no other funds were specifically identified.

The budget described was reasonable. One example of this is that salaries were broken down by hours and days and a rationale was provided for each of the positions in the budget.

The budget described was sufficient. Extraordinary costs seem to have been taken into account. For example, the cost for 100 replacement iPads and technology support were included in the budget. Funds requested were explained as one-time and ongoing costs.

F1 received an 8. The budget was reasonable and sufficient to support the plan. The applicant did not provide many funds outside of the grant to support the project, which somewhat diminished the sustainability.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

F2 received a low high-range score of 8 because the applicant demonstrated some potential for sustainability beyond the grant through creating a vision beyond the period of the grant. The applicant provided a budget for three years after the grant, but no potential sources of funds, outside of specified contributions from each participating schools'/districts' general operating budgets, were included in the budget. The applicant stated that a sustainability plan will be created within six months of the start of the project and will be reviewed and updated every six months. This illustrated commitment on the part of sustainability by the applicant.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not write to the competitive preference priority.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant coherently and comprehensively addressed how it will build on the core educational assurance areas.

In the applicant's plan, learning was personalized for students through:

- individualized learning plans, which included college and career-ready standards
- digital resources (iPads, and curriculum) to create individual learning experiences for students
- teachers to guide students individually and in small groups
- collaborative learning
- training for teachers to ensure that this transition in learning environment is effective
- resources for teachers to make the learning effective for each student

Total	210	176
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0732KY-3 for Boyd County Board of Education



A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(1)

The applicant describes the "stark reality" of its current reality and the challenges facing its students, families and communities. More significant, the applicant uses data - only 31% of students deemed college and career ready, 16th in the nation for the number of schools located in rural areas, 43rd in the nation for child poverty, over 50% of its students participate in the USDA free and reduced lunch program - as evidence to engage and mobilize school administrators, teachers, parents, business leaders and community stakeholders in nine school districts to form the Northeast Kentucky Race to the Top - District Consortium. The Consortium is comprised of thirteen rural, economically depressed school districts.

The vision put forth by the Consortium is "100% ready for college and career, technologically savvy, competitive in a global market place and capable of contributing to the growth and vitality of their own hometowns and the nation". The reform agenda adopted by the Consortium focuses on STEM education and seeks to address the unique learning needs of each and every student in grades 6 -12 across all Consortium Member Districts. To achieve the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning and increasing equity Personalized Learning Environments will be established through the implementation of S.T.U.D.I.O. Learning (Students & Teachers United in Discovering Individualized Learning): Unbridled Success in Northeastern Kentucky - a focused effort to redefine the traditional classroom by equipping each participating school with one technology-rich, student-centered, personalized learning STUDIO teaching classrooms.

The applicant's process to engage key stakeholders, conduct an analysis of student data in thirteen districts and review professional literature has led to the identification of the R Factor - Rigor, Relevance, Relationships, Results and Reform - concepts the applicant believes are a fit to the four core educational assurance areas to achieve college and career readiness. The following is offered by the applicant as evidence of the STUDIO alignment and support of the four assurance areas:

Adopting standards that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in a global economy - In 2009, State legislation (Senate Bill 1) mandated a new accountability system Unbridled Learning: College/Career Readiness for All. This legislation establishes indicators for college and career readiness adopted as part of the Kentucky Common Core Standards. The legislation also includes accountability for high school graduates college and career readiness percentage, readiness assessments (EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT) and graduation rates. STUDIO Learning will personalize Kentucky's Common Core Standards, particularly those related to STEM, in a technology rich setting designed to familiarize students with STEM workplace environments. Participating students will be required to meet all college and career ready graduation requirements.

Building data systems that measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals about how to improve instruction - STUDIO Learning will incorporate many different systems to assess, report and improve instruction, including, Kentucky's Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS); K-PREP, Kentucky's assessment program; EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT, interest and academic assessments; MAP, Measures of Academic Progress, an adaptive formative assessment and student growth metric; and Dynamic Key Performance Indicators. These resources are aligned to Kentucky's Common Core and College and Career Readiness Standards. The combination of these tools give educators resources to assess student learning, monitor student progress and plan for improvement.

Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where needed most - Current student achievement results across all thirteen districts (absent science assessment scores), combined with the need to recruit, develop and incent qualified and high effective STEM teachers and a highly effective Executive Director suggests that the Consortium does not currently have the content expertise, human capital and leadership needed to initiate and sustain and ensure the success of the STUDIO Learning model. This is a red flag and

dilemma. The applicant's vision cannot be achieved without these qualified and effective resources and the current regional circumstances (economic, rural and remote locations, etc.), as noted in the applicant's compelling introduction, could make it difficult to recruit and retain needed talent and/or develop the existing base of educators. The budget allocates approximately 4% or \$1.3M to professional development - this may be insufficient given the scope of need.

Turning around lowest achieving schools - The applicant cites that Consortium member schools are making steady progress. A review of high school academic achievement data in section (B)(1) suggests that schools are making overall gains; however, students in the low socioeconomic subgroup appear to have persistently lower gains across the content areas and no high school achieve greater than 79% proficient with many falling far short.

The applicant makes a strong and compelling data informed case for it's vision and STUDIO Learning model and proposal. The State of Kentucky (a Race to the Top state winner) commitment to the Common Core and College and Career Standards and data systems provide a solid base from which to build and individualize the STUDIO Learning model for each participating district, school and student. The STUDIO Learning model's success depends upon having highly qualified, innovative STEM educators and transformational leaders in each participating school. These are capabilities, based on the proposal, that do not currently exist and must be recruited or developed. Persistently low academic achievement and graduation rates, despite focused reform efforts, particularly among the low socioeconomic student subgroup, compound the issue.

The combination of a reasoned and compelling vision and State supported infrastructure are positive aspects of this criterion. The current gap in STEM human capital and leadership capacity, the inadequate funding in the budget for professional development and challenges exhibited in the data to make sufficient academic gains reduce the overall score in this section.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(2)

(a) A total of 82% of students (15,409) in 39 schools will participate in the STUDIO Learning model. The applicant provides detailed information about the process used to establish the Consortium and align district's on common criteria to identify participating students. A hallmark of the process is the buy-in from community members, public officials and participating staff members in each school. Letters of support from community members and public officials included in the Appendix. Each participating district has signed a Memorandum of Understanding. An additional requirement to participate is that at least 70% of participating school staff sign a Grant Buy In Agreement. These signed documents are also included in the Appendix.

Each participating school reflects similar demographics, assessment data, and challenges in preparing students for college and career readiness. Free and reduced lunch status (40% and above), assessment data, disability and gender gaps were used as criteria to identify participating schools.

The 31.8% high school graduate college and career readiness percentage is the driving reason to target middle and high school students. The Consortium, collectively, determined that Grades 6 -12 would be the focus on the STUDIO Learning initiative; the rationale is that these students are old enough to make full and effective use of the STUDIO Learning's technology based learning model and to grasp the focused personalized learning environment. The rationale presented by the applicant raises a concern on many fronts; first, the student achievement, socio-economic and geographic indicators suggest that the applicant's challenges are persistently systemic; second; the student achievement challenges presenting themselves in grade 6 - 12 began in grades PreK - 5; and third, the issue is not whether the student is old enough to use technology or grasp the personalized learning environment, it is an issue of determining the strategies that best meet the needs of students regardless of age and circumstance. The applicant has an opportunity to substantively change how children in all grades experience a personalize learning environment. However, the applicant's rationale may cause them to overlook an opportunity to make profound and systemic change for children in the elementary grades, too.

(b) The applicant provides a detailed list of 39 participating schools.

(c) The applicant provides the following details:

- total number of participating students: 15,409
- participating students from low income families: 8,654
- participating high needs students: 9,741
- participating educators: 902

The applicant provided all of the requested information and the participating schools collectively meet the competition's

eligibility requirements.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)

10

6

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(3)

The applicant describes a collective awakening that challenged deeply held beliefs about education and its impact student achievement. current teaching and learning structures. This introspection has caused the applicant to rethink the role of leadership, teaching and learning and reform school structures - both important aspects of a meaningful reform agenda to impact and sustain district wide change. The applicant offers the following insight - "When we make learning personal, teaching and learning changes; and the roles of teachers, students and principals change. We must connect with parents and community stakeholders in assisting us in redefining what we call "school", into a Personal Learning Environment (PLE)."

The applicant's theory of change, driven by the aforementioned observation, and supported through the STUDIO Learn initiative, consists of reforms in several key interrelated areas; the teaching process, the learning process, the environment and leadership support mechanisms. The Kentucky Common Core Standards and Project Lead the Way will serve as the basis for the educational standards. The "R Factor" (previously mentioned in this section) will emphasize the tenants of rigor, relevance, relationships and results to create a culture of teaching, leading and learning that leads to college and career readiness. The participant describes the reform of the following areas:

- The Teaching Process: STUDIO Teach is the cornerstone of the STUDIO Learn initiative. Participating schools are committed to developing and recruiting teachers to who want to become facilitators and guides of the learning process; rather than "sage on the stage" these teachers will be the "guide at the side". The applicant describes a shift in the classroom dynamics from one where the teacher is in charge to one where the student co-design lessons and classroom experiences and set high expectations for their own learning and growth. This concept incorporates five key elements of a personalized learning environment -
 1. Offering students flexible, anytime/anywhere learning opportunities beyond the school building and classroom walls,
 2. Redefining the teacher role and expanding the concept of teacher,
 3. Engaging students in project based, authentic learning opportunities both in and outside of the classroom,
 4. Embracing a student-driven learning path; and
 5. Providing students with opportunity to participate in master/competency-based progress/pace.

In Table 3 the applicant compares and contracts the current system in participating schools to the STUDIO Learning Personalized Learning System and offers that the applicant's model is derived from research based strategies and best practices developed by the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents. The applicant acknowledges the importance of professional development and the need to establish Professional Learning Communities among those teachers within and across participating schools.

- The Learning Environment: STUDIO Learning environments will be designed to resemble a high-tech work and learning environment that is reflective of the STEM learning emphasis. It is the antithesis of a traditional classroom where student sit in rows and the teacher is at the head of the class. Instead, these classrooms are dynamic, technology rich environments designed to focus students on collaborative and cooperative learning. Each student is giving a laptop and technology ensures that content and interactions are recorded and available 24/7. Tables or pods will give students access to high definition displays, document camera and push operated microphones. The culture, driven by the STUDIO teaching model, will be designed to embody the following characteristics in the participating middle and high school classrooms:
 1. Positive Interdependence: instilling a belief that they "sink or swim together" in their learning process, balanced by,
 2. Individual Accountability: A recognition by students that "students learn together, but perform alone",
 3. Face-to-Face (Promotive) Interaction: Integrating the opportunity for students to give oral explanations of problem solving, discussion of concepts being learned and connecting present learning with past knowledge,
 4. Interpersonal and Small Group Social Skills: Combining task work (academic subject matter) with teamwork (relationship and social skill) to encourage and develop decision making, trust-building, communication as well as conflict management,
 5. Group Processing: Giving students the opportunity to analyze individual and group learning processes to inform process improvements,

6. Teaching and Learning: Creating a shared responsibility learning structure where classroom activities scaffold in a dynamic and integrated manner to emphasize personal intellectual development and mastery of college and career ready standards.

- Leadership Infrastructure and Support: It is planned that School Based Decision Making Councils (Leadership Teams), Local Boards of Education and Superintendents will work together to shift from a "one size fits all" strategy, to one that increases school autonomy for participating schools in matters of scheduling, staffing, roles/responsibilities and budgeting. The STUDIO Learning Project Advisory Team will work collaboratively to develop and implement a uniform Consortium-wide Superintendent Evaluation System by SY 2014 -2015. All participating districts have interoperable, robust data systems that meet the Race to the Top District requirements for teacher-student match data, student growth and the capability to match student level preschool - grade 12 and higher education data. Life/Career Coaches will serve as student mentors and work with participating students to create Personalized Learning Plans informed by assessment and non-cognitive data. These mentors will also conference with student, parents, teachers and community stakeholders on a regular basis to ensure students are on meeting their goals and the college and career readiness graduation standards.

The applicant describes a high quality plan complete with goals, activities, timeline and responsibilities to implement the STUDIO Learning model in participating schools and districts. The STUDIO Learning model includes the implementation of 3 classrooms in each of 13 participating district's middle and high schools. What is not addressed in the overall theory of change model is the extent to which the STUDIO Learning model concepts will be translated into meaningful district wide reform that is woven throughout participating schools to affect whole system reform. In the absence of whole system reform it is unclear how participating schools, teachers and students will navigate between current school and classroom cultures (responsible for current outcomes) and the new schools and classroom culture (designed to affect different outcomes).

Additionally, the implementation of 3 classrooms in each of 13 districts, each with different populations of students, raises the question of equity. For example, the elementary schools have fewer students than middle schools and middle schools have fewer students than high schools. It is stated in the application that on average one STUDIO Learning classroom is intended to serve 300 students. The difference in middle schools and high school population size would suggest a potential disparity in the number of students that will benefit from the STEM classrooms.

The applicant earns high marks for the high quality plan and the theory of change described in the narrative; however, the concerns about the potential consequences of reform limited to only 39 classrooms across 13 districts, as well as the question of equality, tempers the rating.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	4
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(4)

The applicant states a vision - "100% of students will be college and career ready and technology savvy to compete in a global marketplace and capable of contributing to the growth and vitality of their hometowns and the nation". The applicant describes in section (A)(3) a thoughtful and compelling reform model - STUDIO Learning - to address the criteria for accelerated student achievement, deepening student learning and increasing equity. However, the student data presented in this section, as measured by EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT readiness assessments and the disparity between the graduation rate and college enrollment rate suggests that the applicant's 100% goal while "ambitious" will depend on a high quality and equitable implementation of the elements of the STUDIO Learning model to have "achievable" impact to achieve the applicants goals.

The applicant references in previous sections of the application narrative the use of Kentucky's K-PREP summative assessment, EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT readiness assessments and the MAP formative assessment to determine how student's are performing. In doing so, the applicant does not indicate which of these are used to represent Kentucky's official ESEA targets or baseline data; nor does the applicant provide an analysis of its data to support the Consortium's vision and reform plan.

(a) The applicant does not provide the information requested in the section "Summative assessments being used (e.g., name of the ESEA assessment or end-of-course test). It is unclear to this reviewer whether the ACT (EXPLORE and

PLAN) benchmark data being reported for each district and school meets the reporting criteria for proficiency and growth. No reference is made in the data about the K-PREP assessment. The applicant does articulate a goal (using ACT benchmark data) that "the percentage of students reaching benchmark in each content area will increase 3% each year of the grant except for those areas where a 3% increase would exceed 100% and areas where more than 3% is called for".

It appears from the tables of data provided for each participating district that these goals apply only to 8th, 10th and 11th grade students for English, Reading and Mathematics content areas. And with the exception of the Menifee School District reporting 7th grade proficiency (including Science), there is no data provided for 6th, 7th, 9th and 12th grades. The applicant has omitted from the section the requested data to meet the criteria; more significantly, it does not appear that the applicant has the data needed to inform the STEM Personalized Learning Model being advocated in this application. Additionally, the measure of benchmarks may provide insight into student growth, it does not report student's proficiency to Kentucky's Common Core and College and Career Readiness Standards - as such there is no baseline which leaves this reviewer to make an inference from the data to assess whether the applicants goals are "ambitious or achievable".

(b) Again, the applicant uses the ACT (EXPLORE and PLAN) benchmarks to report it goals. No State baseline data is provided from which to determine whether the goals are "ambitious or achievable". Additionally, the data among the districts is arrayed differently with some districts showing increases in the achievement and other district showing decreases. No State baseline data is provided causing this reviewer to draw an inference from incomplete data to determine whether the applicants goals are "ambitious and achievable".

(c) Of the 13 districts, 8 districts target a 100% graduation rate goal for each of their student subgroups. The remaining 5 districts established graduation rate goals ranging from 71.7% to 98.25%. The overall baseline graduation rate baseline ranged from 57.3% (Lawrence County High School) to 91.55% (Ashland High School - Non Low Socio-Economic student subgroup).

(d) Baseline college enrollment data ranges from 6% (Morgan County - male subgroup) to 83% (Ashland County - overall). College enrollment goals range from 100% (Menifee County - girls subgroup) to 20% (Morgan County - males subgroup). Five counties have establish college enrollments goals of 90%.

The differences (often very significant) in each district's current baseline data and goals (for performance on summative assessments, decreasing the achievement gap, graduation rates and college enrollment) contributes to a (possibly) unanticipated and significant complexity regarding equity and the allocation and targeted use of grant resources based on need versus student population or number of schools. The comparative analysis between the high school graduation rate and college enrollment lead suggest to this reviewer a potential gap in the STUDIO Learning model to address the needs of low socioeconomic and special needs students who score consistently below other student subgroups. No reference is made by the applicant regarding these data and strategies to address the needs of these subgroups as part of the overall strategy.

The absence of required data and/or information confirming the State assessment baselines as well as the lack of any data analysis to support and reinforce the applicants vision contribute to the rating.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	5

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(1)

(a) The sole source of data provided by the applicant is a single table of data for each of 12 participating districts, with the exception of Boyd County,. The tables are organized to report standardized assessment proficiency scores for Reading, Writing and Mathematics and with the exception of one district, Greenup District, report at least three years of aggregated scores. For the most part, school district's are trending towards improvement with small gains being made and sustained in each of the three content areas.

There is an absence of specific information delineated by grade level and subgroup, particularly for the Grade 6 -12 target group; therefore it is unclear and difficult to determine whether the applicant has demonstrated the ability to impact and improve student achievement outcomes, improve the high school graduation rates, increase college enrollment and achieve ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest performing schools.

The applicant provides a narrative about each district's accomplishments. Common among them are being named "Schools to

Watch", developing relationships with colleges and universities to improve curriculum mapping and instruction, Response to Intervention and Carbo Learning Styles. The applicant mentions that all Consortium members have increased their focus on providing ongoing, job-embedded professional development for their educators, particularly in the areas of Mathematics and Literacy. The districts regularly conduct academy sessions that provide staff with effective and research-based strategies (in reading, math and writing), data analysis procedures, best practices and curriculum and assessment processes.

Of significant note is Secretary Arne Duncan's invitation to the Principal of Carter Middle School and Superintendent of Carter County Schools to attend a Washington, D. C. luncheon to be recognized for the school's reform achievement. Additionally, in 2012, Carter Middle School was named one of the ten Break Through Schools by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

(b) The applicant did not name or provide data about the Consortium's lowest performing schools, although the applicant did cite two schools in the Consortium, East Carter High School and Isonville Elementary, as examples of schools that have implemented reforms to improve student achievement. The applicant noted that data regarding the Consortium districts' four year track record was included in the appendices. This information was not included.

(c) The applicant states that Consortium districts make student performance data available to student, parents and teachers using multiple forms of communication. Students work with teachers using data walls and in individual conferences to review performance and set goals. Information is shared with parents via the Parent Portal - an online system that makes data available to parents and students to check grades and attendance from home. Parents receive progress reports twice during the grading period and are provided results of the EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT assessments and invited to attend conferences to review and analyze the data. Most importantly, teachers and students use scores from the many State and district assessments to identify growth opportunities and set goals for continued academic improvement.

The data provided in the section, while not what is required to meet the criteria, show pockets of success and illuminates persistent challenges among Consortium districts. The applicant has provided in the narrative evidence of replicable best practices to adopt and leverage into the applicant's reform model. Unfortunately because of the limited data provided in the section the applicant has failed to exhibit and establish a case for a clear track record of success. The applicant is given ratings credit for providing narrative and example of successful practice for most of the districts.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)

5

3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(2)

The applicant states that:

(a) Personnel salary tables are available on the district websites and published in the local newspaper.

(b) School level instructional staff salaries are available as as aggregate and made available to the public in Annual Financial Reports via the district's website. Hard copies are also available at the Public Library and District Central Office. A report is presented monthly to the Board's of Education. Actual personnel salaries for school based instructional personnel is also available.

(c) Actual salaries for school based personnel, for teachers only, are available upon request. Salary charts are posted on the district website.

(d) Actual non-personnel school level expenditures are made available to the public monthly when reported to the School Based Decision Making Council and are annually reported on the district report card.

The applicant's response leaves in question the extent to which actual personnel salaries at the school level for all-school level instructional and support staff and actual non-personnel expenditures are made readily available. It is not clear to this reviewer whether personnel salary tables provide explicit salary information and how the aggregate data for school personnel makes transparent school level instructional staff salaries. It is also not evident that the applicant takes a proactive position to make public, without a request, the requisite salary and non-personnel expenditure information.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)

10

6

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(3)

The applicant states that the Consortium has the successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement personalized learning environments and offers the following evidence to support its assertion:

1. Boyd County is the Consortium's fiscal agent for the STUDIO Learning initiative and operates based on the legal status of the Board with Corporate Powers to manage and control public schools in the district. The Board may establish schools and provide courses and other services as necessary for the promotion of education and the general health and welfare of students, including 1) policy governance, 2) ensuring academic achievement, 3) district strategic planning and community engagement.

2. State legislation Senate Bill 1, establishes district accountability under a new system, Unbridled Learning: College/Career-Readiness for All.

3. State legislation KRS 160:107 support "Districts of Innovation" - this legislation allows 1) "Districts of Innovation are those districts that submit a plan of innovation and get the approval of the Kentucky Department of Education are exempted from certain administrative regulations and statutory provision to improve the educational performance of students with the district; 2) "innovation is defined as a new or creative alternative to existing instructional and administrative practices that are intended to improve the academic performance of all students and 3) "Schools of Innovation" means a school that voluntarily participates in a district innovation plan and includes waivers and exemptions from local board policies, selected provisions of the Kentucky Administrative Regulations and selected sections of the Kentucky Revised Statues.

The Consortium leadership will position the STUDIO Learning initiative and encourage participating districts to apply for District Innovation status. Additionally, the applicant states that the STUDIO Learning model is aligned with House Bill 1 in the following ways 1) the development of individualized learning plans as part of creating the personalized learning environments , 2) the introduction of College-Career Coaches to monitor student progress along the college-career pathway, 3) academic advisors to accelerate student learning, 4) the introduction of technology-based learning platforms, 5) ongoing professional development.

The State legislative environment is creating the conditions for innovation balanced with accountability. It appears from the narrative that the State accountability system is in place and that the innovation process is emerging - both important and necessary conditions to support personalized learning environments. However, until the Consortium and participating districts apply for and gain approval for District Innovation status, the Consortium and its participating district do not appear to have the sufficient State, legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant's proposal.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(4)

(a) The 13 participating districts had five face to face meetings and weekly conference calls. To expand the level of engagement the Consortium formed five work groups, each charged with the task of engaging critical stakeholders and worked with parents, students, teachers and potential project partners to gather input and get feedback. Some of the specific activities (face-to-face and one-to-one meetings, conference calls, group meetings, presentations) included:

- Meetings with Parent Leadership Teams, Student Councils, school based Decision Making Councils, Professional Learning Communities, businesses, colleges, universities,
- Presentations of the STUDIO Learning initiative to the Boards of Education governing participating districts,
- Meetings with Superintendent Advisory Teams
- Focus groups with Family Resource Youth Services Centers, 21st Century Community Learning Center Coordinators, school nurses, guidance counselors and school based mental health professionals.

(b) The applicants states throughout the application that the Consortium consists of 13 participating districts; however, lists only nine participating districts in Table 17 as having a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlines STUDIO Learning participation requirements signed by the Superintendent, Local School Board President and President of the Local Teachers Union or Associates (if applicable). In addition to the MOU each participating district is required to have letters of support, 70% of teacher buy-in, Mayor/Judge Letters Proof of Contact and requested completed charts. Copies of these documents and letters of support from parents and parent organizations, student organizations, early learning programs, the business community, civil rights organizations, advocacy groups, local civic and community-based organizations, and institutions of higher education are provided in the Appendix.

The applicant describes a well-designed, well-organized and extensive process to ensure the "meaningful engagement and involvement" of a broad and diverse group of stakeholders including students, families, teachers, principals and project partners to give input into a needs assessment and gap analysis of 13 participating school district's educational system. Although there is evidence of a discrepancy in the application regarding the number of participating districts (13) and those who have signed the MOU (12), the applicant has provided substantial written documentation of support as well as evidence of a well coordinated effort to engage and gain the support of the community, teachers and governmental leaders.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

A high-quality plan for an analysis of the applicant's current status in implementing personalized learning environments and the logic behind the reform proposal contained within the applicant's proposal, including identified needs and gaps that the plan will address.

(B)(5)

The applicant has a grasp of the key indicators - per capita income, poverty, unemployment, children in poverty, high school graduation, college readiness, state county ranking - for each participating district. This information has informed the proposed STUDIO Learning model.

The applicant's Plans to Analyze the Current Status of Personalized Learning (Table 21) includes six goals supported by descriptions of activities, deliverables, timelines person responsible:

1. Identify the unique needs, strengths and weaknesses of individual grade bands, subject specific curricular content, schools, educators, and administrators as they relate to full implementation of Personalized Learning Environments for all students throughout Consortium members districts.
2. Measure student performance.
3. Analyze student performance data.
4. Gather feedback regarding status of personalized learning environment.
5. Prepare status report.
6. Develop action plan to ensure implementation of personalized learning environments.

The applicants concludes this section by describing how the STUDIO Learning model will build on the core educational assurance areas to create personalized learning environments that accelerate student achievement and deepen learning. There is an inconsistencies in the amount grant request amount. In this section there is a request for \$18,049,068 instead of \$29,991.040.

The applicant has a high quality plan to identify participating district school's needs and gaps. The discrepancy in the grant request amount contributes to the reduced score.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	13

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(1)

(i) The applicant states that STUDIO Teaching is the cornerstone of the STUDIO Learning model. STUDIO Teaching emphasizes collaborative and cooperative learning among students. The environment plays a critical role in the learning process and will be designed to resemble a high-tech work and learning environment that is reflective of the STEM learning emphasis. It is the antithesis of a traditional classroom

where students sit in rows and the teacher is at the head of the class. Instead, these classrooms are dynamic, technology rich environments designed to focus students on collaborative and cooperative learning. Each student is given a laptop and technology ensures that content and interactions are recorded and available 24/7. Tables or pods will give students access to high definition displays, document camera and push operated microphones. The culture, driven by the STUDIO teaching model, will be designed to embody the following characteristics in the participating middle and high school classrooms:

1. Positive Interdependence: Instilling a belief that they "sink or swim together". In their learning process students will learn to set and support mutual goals, manage the division of labor, establish roles and learn to share responsibility,
2. Individual Accountability: A recognition by students that "students learn together, but perform alone" - this requires that students can measure group or individual achievements,
3. Face-to-Face (Promotive) Interaction: Integrating the opportunity for students to give oral explanations of problem solving, discussion of concepts being learned and connecting present learning with past knowledge,
4. Interpersonal and Small Group Social Skills: Combining task work (academic subject matter) with teamwork (relationship and social skill) to encourage and develop decision making, trust-building, communication as well as conflict management,
5. Group Processing: Giving students the opportunity to analyze individual and group learning processes to inform process improvements,
6. Teaching and Learning: Creating a shared responsibility learning structure where classroom activities scaffold in a dynamic and integrated manner to emphasize personal intellectual development and mastery of college and career ready standards.

(ii) All students will develop and Individual Learning Plan (ILP) that includes a strong college-career readiness component. The ILP is directly linked to the State of Kentucky College and Career Readiness Delivery Plan - a statewide initiative. The plan is based on seven elements noted in Table 22: Linking ILP's to Kentucky College and Career Readiness Standards. The seven standards include: 1) Persistence to Graduation, 2) Course and Assessment Alignment, 3) Unbridled Learning Accountability Model, 4) Targeted Interventions, 5) Career Readiness Pathways, 6) Acceleration and 7) College and Career Advising. Each strategy has associated support resources identified. An observation of Standard #2, Course and Assessment Alignment - the resources listed do not include STEM course content (with the exception of Mathematics). STEM content is particularly important given that it is the focus of the STUDIO Learning model.

The introduction and integration of the ILP is not specifically mentioned in Table 2 - Overall proposed Race to the Top District implementation timeline; nor is it specifically mentioned in Table 24: Timeline for implementation of steps to improve student learning, college and career readiness. Therefore, it is not clear from the details of the STUDIO Learning initiative how the seven standards will be integrated and/or supported by the Consortium, participating districts, in the schools and in the classrooms. This is concerning because the ILP is the bridge between the required course work and the participating student college and career interests and intentions.

(iii) The applicant describes how the STUDIO Learning model is designed to support STEM and provide deep learning experiences through an inquiry based model of teaching. The STUDIO Learning model of instruction is designed to be driven by student interests, with teachers acting more as guides and facilitators to help students arrive at their "true" questions - that which they really care about learning. The STUDIO Learning and STUDIO Teaching model will be designed to encourage and engage students in a process of research, inquiry and reporting that is aligned with the curriculum. Supporting rationale based on information from the National Research Council including the National Science Standards is provided.

(iv) There is no direct evidence in the narrative that addresses exposure to diverse culture, contexts and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning.

(v) STUDIO Teaching, as described in section (i) includes focused attention to develop the skills and traits noted in section (v); however, it does not appear that an assessment is described or part of the implementation plan. The mastery of critical academic content is mandated by the State and is a part of the STUDIO Learning model.

(b) With the support of parents and educators, there is a strategy to ensure that each student has access to—

(i) The applicant reinforces that STUDIO Learning is based on a highly engaging, interactive, student-focused teaching model that is built upon a foundation of individualized learning. The applicant mentions previously that every participating student in grades 6 - 12 will create, with the support of teachers, counselors, principals and parents, an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) - a tool directly linked to the State of Kentucky college and Career Readiness Delivery Plan. The ILP includes measures to chart progress and includes mechanisms, tools and resources to make corrections as necessary along the way. It is not referenced in this section; however, the EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT readiness assessments also provide information to inform the ILP.

(ii) A variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments;

The applications states that STUDIO Learning includes all of the key elements of effective personalized learning environments - based on work done by the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents. These elements include;

- Flexible, anytime, anywhere learning where participating students will have technology based anytime, anywhere access to recorded content, online databases, e-folios, and distance learning partnership.
- Redefinition of the teachers role
- Project-based learning opportunities
- Student-driven learning opportunities
- Mastery of competency based progression and pace
- Strong relationships and a culture of respect

(iii) The applicant describes a technology rich learning environment and the distribution of laptop computers to each participating student. It is not clear from the application narrative or the implementation timeline how, when or if the curriculum will be translated into digital learning content or if other sources of content will be used in the classroom.

(iv) Ongoing and regular feedback, including, at a minimum—

(A) The applicant indicates that participating districts typically measure college and career readiness progress toward standards every six weeks using a variety of different tools that are aligned to the Kentucky Common Core Standards. Some of these assessments include; Kentucky EXPLORE, PLAN AND ACT readiness and interest assessments, COMPASS (a computer adaptive college placement test), English Language Proficiency and End-of-Course assessments.

(B) All students, through their ILP, identify a student's strengths, challenges, interests and learning styles which are then matched to a profile of resources and tools to maximize a student's learning potential. This resource begins when the participating student is in 6th grade and continues with them until they graduate and beyond the formal education process into all aspects of professional and personal life.

(v) The applicant states that all participating teachers have access to the Kentucky System of Intervention (KSI) - a statewide framework to address academic and behavioral needs for all students, preschool through grade 12. A component of the Proficiency Plan, the KSI is considered a key strategy for helping student obtain academic success and ensure they are college and career ready. The system offers two tiers of intervention targeted to the students' academic and behavioral needs. The applicant references several different resources and tools available to high need and special need students; however, there is no specific reference to how the KSI will be leveraged to respond to the achievement gaps of the special needs and low socio-economic subgroups of participating students.

(c) The applicant states that students will receive training at the start of each semester to acquaint them with the proper use of tools and resources. Help and technical assistance will be available and an annual survey will be conducted to measure the extent to which student value and understand the training and support.

The applicant presents a high-quality plan to implement the STUDIO Learning initiative, except for the omission of the ILP in the implementation timeline, the lack of reference to STEM content in the Readiness Standards, the absence of plans to expose participating students to diverse cultures, context, etc., explicit mention of plans to offer digital content and finally, an absence of a plan for focused attention on special needs and low-socioeconomic student subgroups. The factors affect the rating.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)

20

12

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(2)

(a) All participating educators (as defined in this notice) engage in training, and in professional teams or communities, that supports their individual and collective capacity to—

(i) Support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each student's academic needs and help ensure all students can graduate on time and college- and career-ready;

The applicant states that each participating school's Professional Learning Communities (PLC) will be "retooled" to align with the STUDIO Learn vision, goals and objectives. Within the Consortium of participating schools and teachers the PLCs will address the following four elements and resources:

- What do we want students to know? (standards based curriculum and instruction)
- How do we know when students have learning? (assessment based insights)
- What do we do when student's don't learn? (student intervention, teacher capacity building)
- What do we do if student's already have the skill or knowledge assessed? (enrichment or extension of learning)

(ii) The applicant has described in detail (in previous sections) the characteristics of the STUDIO Learn model. It is project-based, hands-on, experiential learning activities to engage students in ways that match the students learning styles, academic interests and career goals. The technology rich classroom will be designed as a high-tech workplace to encourage collaboration and discussion. The teacher will serve as a facilitator and guide. Every student will have an Individual Learning Plan - the content represents the students interests, academic plan and college career goals.

(iii) The applicant reinforces that participating schools measure student learning approximately every six weeks using many different types of formative and summative assessments. These include, EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT, English Language Proficiency and End-of-Course assessments. The applicant is not explicit in the use of this data to inform the acceleration of student progress and the improvement and collective practice of educators; however, the PLC elements align and support this criteria.

(iv) The evaluation of participating teachers and principals is within purview of the Kentucky Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES). The goal as stated in the narrative is to have every student taught by an effective teacher and every school led by an effective principal. House Bill 40, which authorized a new statewide evaluation system for Kentucky public school teachers and principals was unanimously approved in January 2012 and will go into effect in all districts by 2014 -2015.

The evaluation system includes multiple measures of student growth and achievement as well as components that measure leadership, professionalism, instruction, learning climate and assessment practices. The evaluation system measures performance across five domains:

- Planning and Preparation
- Classroom Environment
- Instruction
- Professional Responsibilities
- Student Growth

The applicant does not mention when participating school will adopt the new evaluation; nor is it mentioned how the Consortium and participating schools plan to use the data from the personnel evaluations to inform individual and collective effectiveness.

(b) All participating educators (as defined in this notice) have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice). Those resources must include—

(i) The applicant states that educators will participate in job embedded professional development and benefit from participation in the Professional Learning Communities as described in section a(i). The transformation from teacher to facilitator and guide, the introduction of inquiry based instruction, adaptive learning environment and the acquisition of new technology enabled instruction skills would seem to require targeted professional development that goes beyond what is described.

(ii) The Consortium is building capacity and plans to use the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS) - a system that connects standards, electronically stored instructional materials, curriculum, formative assessments, instruction, professional learning and evaluation of teachers in one place to improve instructional outcomes, teacher effectiveness and leadership. All participating schools and teachers will have access to this system.

(iii) The applicant describes how STUDIO Learn is designed to have students take an active role in the design, including the tools, resources and approaches used as part of their personalized learning environment and individualized learning plan. Many different types of methodologies are described that will be used to gather information from key stakeholders, especially the participating students, to match student needs with specific resources and approaches to provide continuous feedback. All participating districts have an inter operable, robust data system that will provide timely feedback to teachers about student growth. As well the applicant described in a previous section Readiness Standards. While not mentioned here these Standards can provide insight into processes and tools that are available to ensure that student needs are met.

(c) All participating school leaders and school leadership teams (as defined in this notice) have training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress through common and individual tasks toward meeting college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice) or college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice). The training, policies, tools, data, and resources must include:

(i) The new teacher and principal evaluation system includes processes to gather individual and collective data, as well as information about school climate and culture to ensure an environment of continuous improvement. This information will be incorporated in each participating district's annual District Improvement Plan. Other sources of information, such as Perception Survey's (reflects input from family, staff and students) are integrated into the Plan and used as sources of information for continuous improvement.

(ii) The applicant's response to this criteria is that participating teachers will be involved in Professional Learning Communities and a description of professional development is outlined in section (d).

There appears to be an absence of a high quality plan with systems in place to support the initial and ongoing effort to recruit and retain STEM teachers that are required for the STUDIO Learning initiative. It is not clear from the applicant's response that there is a system either in place or planned for that will link professional development to student performance outcomes.

(d) The applicant provides a plan that details a process to embed PLCs and a professional development approach in each participating school. The applicant does not present a high quality plan to increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals. This is troublesome for several reasons - 1) student data suggests that many participating students may be more than one grade level behind in several content areas; 2) the emphasis on STEM in 39 schools increases the difficulty of recruiting and/or developing qualified teachers who are also effective and highly effective; 3) the significant needs of the special needs and low-socio-economic student subgroups compounds the challenges of finding teachers. The absence of a plan also suggests an absence of a baseline analysis to know how many teachers are currently high effective, effective or not effective and how many students are 1 year, 2 years or more behind. The combination of these data is a starting point for the plan.

The successful implementation and transformation of districts, schools, teachers, leaders, students and the system of support that surrounds these key stakeholder is highly dependent upon the transformation of beliefs; acquisition and reinforcement of new skills for instruction, assessment, relationship building, problem solving; adoption of new working structures and practices; and creation of a new culture for work and learning. All of these areas require a system of professional development and collective learning experiences. Additionally, this reviewer is concerned that the applicant has overlooked the need and under represents a plan for a robust, approach to capacity building that mirrors the significance of the STUDIO Learn initiative.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score

(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	11
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(D)(1)</p> <p>The applicant has practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning by—</p> <p>(a) The applicant states that the Consortium will employ a Project Director to provide administrative oversight, delegate responsibility for implementation of day-to-day tasks and ensure compliance with all terms and conditions of the grant and any applicable federal regulations. The applicant describes the Consortium governing structure including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creation of an advisory council comprised of representatives from each participating district to establish policy, make strategic decisions, financial recommendations and support efforts to plan, develop, implement and sustain the initiative, • A Memorandum of Understanding that outlines the specific roles and responsibilities of the lead applicant and Consortium members, • Roles and responsibilities of all parties including the Project Director, Lead Applicant, and Partner Schools <p>The applicant provides in Table 26: STUDIO Learning Project Management the Title and Primary Roles and Responsibility of each project member including the Project Director, Tech Consultant, Curriculum Event Coordinator, Boyd County Chief Financial Officer, Evaluator, District Superintendents and Principals.</p> <p>It is not clear from the narrative the method and process for making different types of decisions, the protocols by which the Consortium will operate, including the protocols for member districts to change roles or leave the consortium, the consortium procurement process and partner district commitment to the process.</p> <p>(b) The applicant states that school leadership teams in participating schools (as defined in this notice) with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non educators, and school-level budgets, citing that the subcommittees of the Leadership Teams meet weekly with the full Leadership Team.</p> <p>(c) The applicant states that Consortium members will offer students opportunities to participate in dual-credit, vocational and career classes. STUDIO Learning embraces mastery-based learning and performance measurement and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum design that is hinged on assessments • Assessment that may take any form to measure proficiency • Graduation to the next level/grade/topic is contingent upon successful completion of prerequisite assessment • Curriculum is committed to success of all children; students are not allowed to give up. <p>(d) The applicant describes State efforts to build educator capacity to successfully design and implement a balanced assessment system. Using the Classroom Assessment for Student Learning: Doing it Right, Using it Well text teachers and leaders are investing in learning the tenets of strong classroom, school and district assessment, analysis and implementation. Educators will have access to the State's accountability system which provides multiple and varied measures of achievement and effectiveness.</p> <p>(e) The applicant states its intention to meet the unique needs of every student and the opportunity for every student to participate fully in all programmatic offerings. If necessary, documents are translated into other languages, translators are offered and assistive devices are available as appropriate. A full GEPA statement is on file.</p> <p>Although the applicant provides information about the project management structure and describes its intention to establish Consortium and leverage State policies and infrastructure, the applicant has not provided evidence of a high quality plan to ensure the implementation of the criteria in the section of the application. Also, the absence of a complete Consortium governance process reduces the rating.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The LEA and school infrastructure supports personalized learning by—</p>		

(a) The applicant describes the various means it will use to ensure that all participating stakeholders, students, parents and educators have access to necessary tools, content and other learning resources both in and out of the school. These means include:

For students: Technology infused classrooms, laptops, other electronic devices, e-portfolios, web portal provide students with 24/7 access to content and learning resources.

For parents: Orientations, secure online access to student academic records, online learning resources, and the STUDIO Learning website will augment parent access to information, tools and resources

For educators: Kentucky's CIITS provides educators with anywhere, anytime access to tools, resources and information, As well, all district's and educators have access to the Student Data Review and Reporting Application and Student Data Tool to retrieve and analyze student assessment data.

For other stakeholders: involvement in school based leadership teams, the project advisory council and the STUDIO Learning website will provide access to need information, tool and resources

(b) Technical support will be provided during school hours. The STUDIO Learning website will host training information, user manuals and links to technical support 24/7. Educators will have additional support from their PLCs and Leadership Teams.

(c) Parents and students have access to student data through a secure web portal with multiple layers of security to ensure confidentiality and prevent unauthorized access. In accessing the website, students and parents have the capability to export data in an open format compatible with various systems (e.g., Excel, .csv, etc.).

(d) As previously stated the Consortium of participating districts use Inter operable data systems.

The applicant describes existing infrastructure to access and share student information and provides a high-quality plan to support the project implementation.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	7

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(E)(1)

The applicant describes an evaluation plan and process designed to provide ongoing qualitative and quantitative performance feedback. This plan includes a focus on six key elements:

- Operating procedures: a set of guidelines has been established to guide the Advisory Council. These include procedures for strategic and financial management, roles and responsibilities and generally accepted accounting practices
- Communications plan: Regular meetings of stakeholders will be held using various methods such as conference calls, email, fax alerts and regularly scheduled meetings to share information. Parents and the community will be informed about the project through monthly participation in School Leadership meeting and through each schools website. Newsletters will be distributed quarterly.
- Planning and decision making: MOU's specify roles and responsibilities and manage expectations. Feedback and input will be gathered from all stakeholders, staff and participants. Decisions will be made by consensus.
- Managing issues of risk: Potential risks and issued will be identified as part of the planning process. Strategies will be developed to mitigate challenges.
- Meeting facilitation: Boyd County will host Consortium meetings.
- Ensuring accountability: The MOU will serve as the basis to manage and monitor accountability.

Although the applicant describes a management process to organize Consortium operations and communications, the applicant did not specify how it will monitor, measure and publicly share information about the quality of the investments (in

professional development, technology and staff) funded by Race to the Top - Districts. Additionally, the applicant did not communicate a continuous improvement process or model that would inform progress towards goals and provide opportunities for corrections and improvements (e.g... plan, do, study, act).

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)

5

2

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(E)(2)

The applicant will use communications methods such as meetings, email, conference calls, newsletters and websites to keep stakeholders engaged and informed. The Advisory Council will receive weekly updates by email. Monthly monitoring of all milestones will occur using standardized templates distributed quarterly to partners and stakeholders. School Leadership Team will be the source of information for parents and the community. Newsletters will be distributed quarterly.

The applicant describes methodologies and practices to distribute and communicate information. This constitutes a one-way, inside-out approach that does not explicitly include mechanisms to encourage feedback and adjustments to the proposed plan. As a result, the plan as described does not meet the requirement of a clear and high quality approach to continuously improve its plan with strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)

5

3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(E)(3)

Ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. For each applicant-proposed measure, the applicant must describe—

(a) The applicant selected 12 performance measures and provides the rationale for each measure. The performance measures establish for the Consortium a shared means by which to monitor and measure the impact of the STUDIO Learning model. Additionally, the performance measures include student achievement, community and social/emotion measures important to student success.

(b) The applicant states that each measure chosen is will provide rigorous, timely and formative information for the STUDIO Learning initiative to accurately and objectively monitor student progress. As previously stated the Consortium of district's share common performance measures; however, the same cannot be said for each district's indicators and targets. When compared to one another, the district's indicator's do not seem reasonable, given the challenges that must be addressed. More importantly when each districts' student achievement indicators and targets are cross referenced to their highly effective and effective teacher and principal performance measures the inconsistencies are apparent. For example, Russell School District targets suggest that 51% of teachers for low socio economic students will be high effective; yet, the district projects that 100% of students will meet standard. This is only one example of many such inconsistencies. It is not reasonable to expect student to make such gains.

(c) The Project Advisory council will review the measures annually to ensure they effectively measure progress. In the event any measure is deemed to be an insufficient gage of progress the council will coordinate changes with the State of Kentucky Department of Education.

The applicant has established thoughtful performance measures and forecast ambitious targets that this reviewer finds will be difficult to achieve.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(E)(4)

The applicant has established a Project Advisory Council Evaluation Subcommittee to work with the U. S. Department of Education Evaluator to evaluate the project's effectiveness. Table 29: Data Collection describes the performance measure, frequency of assessment and responsible party. The applicant does not include in its data collection strategies methods to evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top funded activities such as professional development and activities that employ technology as noted in the criteria description.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's budget, including the budget narrative and tables—</p> <p>(a) The applicant's budget identifies all funds that will support the project including participating district funding. It includes a sustainability budget, including funding by participating districts, that goes 3 years beyond the term grant.</p> <p>(b) The applicants budget represents the consolidated interests of 13 participating districts and appears reasonable to support the development and implementation of the proposal, with one exception. This reviewer has previously stated concerns that the applicant underestimates the need for capacity building as part of the theory of change and has underfunded the professional development budget. With an anticipated budget of \$1,360,00 and 902 participating educators the budget allows only \$376/year/educator (on average). This budget does not appear to allow for contingencies such as the need to train additional teachers, the need to pay to recruit STEM teachers and/or the need to train teachers and staff in participating schools and classrooms to ensure project success.</p> <p>(c) Clearly provides a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities, including--</p> <p>(i) The applicant describes the rationale - sustainability - as the basis for investment. Including a plan based on each district's commitments of resources to the long term success of the project.</p> <p>(ii) The applicant provides a clear delineation of ongoing and one time expenses. One time expenses include technology for the STUDIO Learning classrooms, laptops for students and the STUDIO Learning teaching curriculum all investments in creating and sustaining personalized learning environments.</p>		

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9
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<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(F)(2)</p> <p>The applicants sustainability plans includes a four step process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Each consortium member will continue to contribute resources beyond the grant period. 2) A sustainability plan will be prepared within six months of the start of the project. The plan will include identification of potential local, state and federal funding sources as well as possible community in kind services. A list of action items will be included to plan to approach funders. The sustainability plan will be reviewed and updated every six months. 3) A tracking system will document accomplishments of all formative and summative activities for the purpose of demonstrating efficacy and impact on the lives of the target population of students. 4) The project advisory council and school based leadership team will use evaluation frameworks to measure the degree to which five key elements of Alexander's Conceptual Model of Sustainability in Community Health Partnerships (outcomes based advocacy, vision focus balance, systems orientation, infrastructure development and community linkages) are being addressed. <p>A three year budget totaling \$3,500, 658 has been detailed.</p> <p>The applicant describes a plan with succinct action steps and a detailed budget that ensure continued district funding, mechanisms to capture data and assess impact and the use of a best practice model for sustainability. These attributes of the plan contribute to the plans strength. The forethought for planning through and beyond the grant period and embedded processes and structures contributed to the rating. The plan would be strengthened with a rigorous evaluation component included in the plan.</p>		
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Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides no details to describe public-private partnerships to augment this proposal.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a vision - STUDIO Learning - to create a Consortium of 13 school districts to affect academic improvements among Grade 6 -12 students in 39 schools. Armed with data about the current "stark reality" that only 31.8% of students are college and career ready the applicant's effort has effectively garnered the support of community members, staff, parents and stakeholders for a proposal to bring STEM education into schools, transform leadership instruction, and re-design classrooms to personalize learning environments.

Although the applicant states that all aspects of the model will be designed to meet the requirements of the four core educational reform areas, this reviewer observes that the applicant faces a significant challenge to build the instructional and leadership capacity needed to embed and support a robust STEM curriculum and to initiate and sustain the STUDIO Learning environment. The applicant intends to subscribe to an established best practice model focused on whole child development and teacher as facilitator and coach built upon a foundation of a technology rich learning environment that mirrors a high tech workplace. Achieving this end requires a profound paradigm shift in the teaching and learning model; a shift that requires changes to the process to recruit, develop, reward and retain effective teachers and principals - an effort that this reviewer finds to be not sufficiently acknowledged or addressed in the applicant's proposal.

The rural geographic location, combined with the persist underperforming students and lack of effective and highly effective educators is further evidence of the applicant's challenge. This reviewer has noted that the professional development budget does not appear to be sufficient to support the needed capacity building. Additionally, the lack of attention to K-5 education could prove to be problematic. The root cause of this situation will not be resolved without attending to the needs of the feeder elementary schools. Finally, the lack of attention to the school beyond the STUDIO Learning classroom could also be problematic - the school is a system - and no mention in the proposal is made regarding efforts to transform the entire school, including other staff, to wrap around the STUDIO classroom.

Total	210	124
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